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This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A two-stage optical amplifier comprising

at least one input and at least one output,

a first stage comprising at least one optical amplifying unit and at least one input and at least one output,

a second stage comprising at least one optical amplifying unit and at least one input and at least one output,

contacts disposed at a mid-stage between said first and second stages connectable to an OADM, and

a local control-communication circuit comprising a control-communication channel between said first and second stages that controls said first and second stages so as to allow dynamic matching of at least one optical characteristic of one of said first and second stages to respective at least one characteristic of the other of said first and second stages, and to prevent automatic shutting down of one of said first and second stages whenever the other of said first and second stages is shut down, wherein

the at least one input of the two-stage optical amplifier is connected to the at least one input of the first stage,